Volume 20 No. 11 March 2010

WORKS IN PROGRESS

ESTABLISHED IN 1990 BY THE THURSTON COUNTY RAINBOW COALITION

It's Time to Legalize Marijuana in Washington State

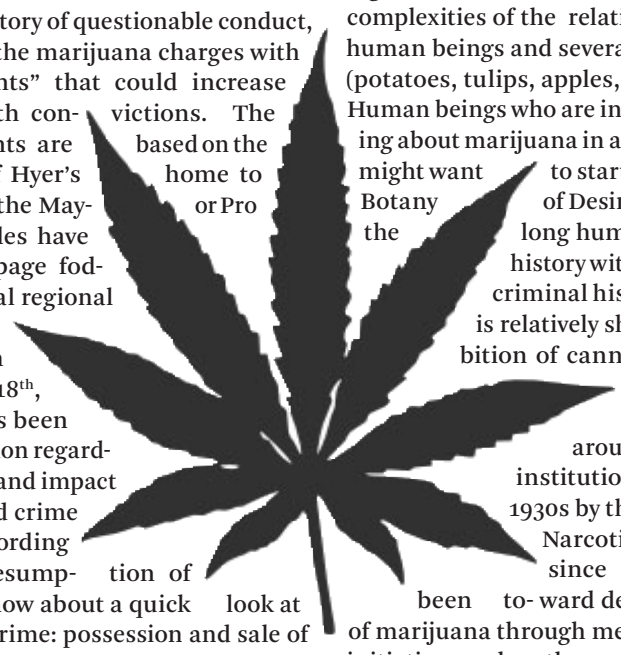
by Mike Coday

The news from Olympia these days is that the State budget is as short as a Blackwater haircut and Mayor Pro Tem Joe Hyer is in hot water after being arrested and charged with possessing and selling marijuana from his Olympia home. These stories have a nexus.

In the story that has been getting too much press and insufficient thought, local businessman, entrepreneur, City Council person, and bon vivant, Joe Hyer, was arrested in February and charged with possession and sale of marijuana from his Legion Way neighborhood home. Lots of folks have been asking the obvious questions: Why would Hyer take this risk? Why would Hyer smoke and sell marijuana? What was he thinking?

But there are other obvious questions that need to be asked, such as: Who cares if Hyer smokes marijuana? So what? Sure, it's generally illegal to possess and sell marijuana in this country, but it's illegal in very much the same way that it was generally illegal to possess and sell alcohol during Prohibition and with the same kind of public policy basis. Who are the victims of this crime? Should we now question Joe's enthusiasm and imagination, his default "happy-guy" persona in the context of a marijuana buzz? Really, who cares? It's not like he was out hiking the Appalachian Trail on the public dime like some prominent elected officials have been known to do.

The bastions of morality in the local GOP party have called for Hyer to resign his elected position, somehow overlooking some basic jurisprudence concepts like the presumption of innocence in our judicial system. The Thurston County Prosecutor's Office, a government office with it's own unfortunate history of questionable conduct, has entered the marijuana charges with "enhancements" that could increase jail time with convictions. The enhancements are based on the proximity of Hyer's home to schools. So, the MayTem's troubles have been front page fodder for several regional papers since the arrest on February 18th, but there has been little discussion regarding the logic and impact of the alleged crime itself. So, affording Joe the presumption of innocence, how about a quick look at the alleged crime: possession and sale of marijuana?



Marijuana is a substance that human beings have cultivated and consumed for thousands of years. Human beings have long recognized the healing, relaxing, and mildly euphoric qualities of this substance. Cannabis first shows up as a medical treatment in Chinese pharmacopia in 2727 B.C. Cannabis was a common ingredient in many medicines and was sold openly at US pharmacies in the late nineteenth century. "The Botany of Desire" is an interesting and informative movie that covers the complexities of the relationship between human beings and several types of plants (potatoes, tulips, apples, and marijuana). Human beings who are interested in thinking about marijuana in a rational manner might want to start by viewing "The Botany of Desire." In contrast to the long human and medical history with marijuana, the criminal history of cannabis is relatively short. Legal prohibition of cannabis possession and cultivation begins in the US around 1906 and was institutionalized in the 1930s by the Uniform State Narcotic Act. The trend since the 1970's has been toward decriminalization of marijuana through medical marijuana initiatives such as the one passed in Washington State in 1998.

The science on marijuana is really quite clear. There are no scientific or compelling public policy reasons to classify marijuana as a dangerous narcotic. Marijuana is a beneficial treatment for numerous medical conditions and for relief of chronic pain. It is no more dangerous (actually much less dangerous and habit-forming) than many legal and controlled substances such as tobacco and alcohol. If you need more information regarding the science on marijuana, I suggest reading the article "Marijuana: What science has to say" in the August, 2006 issue of Cosmos. A more comprehensive overview of science and marijuana is available at www.drugscience.org.

From a public policy point of view, the criminalization of marijuana has been a dismal failure. Lots of people grow, sell, buy and/or consume marijuana. Here's a telling factoid regarding that issue from the Clark County, Indiana prosecuting attorney website:

Despite 50 years of prohibition against marijuana in the United States, recent figures confirm that marijuana is ranked among corn, wheat, and soybeans as one of the four main cash crops grown in terms of dollar volume of sales. http://www.clarkprosecutor.org/html/substnce/mari.htm

They have taken note of the obvious in Indiana. It seems that criminalizing the cultivation, sale and consumption of mari-

▸ **MARIJUANA,** continued on page 10

The United States, Iran, and the Nuclear Hypocrisy

by Marco Rosaire Rossi

On Sunday, February 14th, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton—speaking at the US-Islamic World Forum in Doha, Qatar—lambasted Iran for its development of its nuclear energy program. Clinton accused Iran of "consistently (failing) to live up to its responsibilities." According to Clinton "It has refused to demonstrate to the international community that its nuclear program is entirely peaceful." The evidence cited by Clinton of Iran's aggressiveness is the existence of its nuclear energy program itself. The only reason Iran would establish a nuclear energy program, it is claimed, is to eventually use it to develop weapons and attack other nations. Therefore, any development of nuclear energy is ipso de facto a threat to security and assault on world peace.

The standard the Obama administration has set for Iran does make some sense. The cost in producing nuclear energy--in the terms of its maintenance, its safety, and in dealing with waste—is so grand that it can't succeed without being insured and supported by states; there is no additional benefit to nuclear power unless it provides an avenue, or at the minimum the threat of, to one day be weaponized. Also, today nuclear energy is monopolized by the use of uranium. Thorium, an alternative use of nuclear energy which is cleaner, safer, found in more abundance in nature, and cannot be easily weaponized, is not used as an energy source. If Iran—along with any other state—was serious about developing nuclear energy for peaceful purposes they would invest in thorium reactors rather than uranium. And if they were really serious about developing energy for peaceful purpose, they would invest in clean renewable sources that can't buttress a weapons industry and don't involve scarce resources.

Before judging Iran though, it is important to take the Obama administration's standard and place it on the United States. After all, accusations are only as powerful as the integrity of the people making them. When this standard is applied to the United States, it fails miserably; the US is far more guilty of developing a reckless nuclear energy and weapons program then Iran.

First it is important to take a look at the expansion of the United States own nuclear energy program. Less than a week after Hillary Clinton made her comments, Obama announced an initial $8.3 billion in loan guarantees to the Southern Company for the construction of a nuclear power plant in Augusta, Georgia. The loans come as part of a tripling of nuclear power plant construction loans guarantees from the Department of Energy. The total amount set aside for nuclear power is $54.5 billion. If built, the plant in Augusta will be the first nuclear power plant in the country in nearly three decades.

> Before judging Iran, it is important to take the Obama administration's standard and place it on the United States.

Obama claims that the move toward nuclear energy is necessary for three reasons: combat global warming, job creation, and to meet the energy needs of Americans well into the future. There is some truth to all of them, but taken in the context of other options the claims are misleading. First, it is true that nuclear power will produce less carbon emissions in the atmosphere than coal powered plants, but nuclear energy comes with a whole set of other environmental problems. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has reported that at least 27 of America's 104 licensed reactors are now leaking radioactive tritium. In Vermont, where the worst case of leakage has occurred, tritium has contaminated the water supply putting Vermonters—and possibly organisms in the Connecticut River—at serious risk. Second, building new plants will create jobs. It is estimated that a new nuclear reactor will provide 800 near-term jobs and as many as 3,500 new construction jobs. However, it will be several years before these jobs become available. In contrast, weatherization—which works on making homes more energy efficient—immediately produces jobs and at a cheaper rate. Ohio was able to create 600 new jobs for weatherization by only spending $237 million. There is a national weatherization program, but it is grossly underfunded. Obama has expanded the Department of Energy's Weatherization Assistance Program in the 2011 budget proposal—but that amount still only totals $300 million. And third, there is meeting the growing energy needs of Americans. The truth is that nuclear power is so costly as a source of energy that even if all of the $54.5 billion is spent, it will only provide 1% of the nations current generating capacity. According to nuclear experts like Peter Bradford, a former US Nuclear Regulatory Commission member, even if the United States were to undergo an "atomic renaissance" and push nuclear power the maximum, nuclear energy could only displace 10-15% of the greenhouse gases. Far from being an alternative to carbon-based energy, nuclear energy has always been its supplement.

Next, it is also important to take a look at Obama's own expansion of the United States nuclear arsenal. Despite proclamations of eventually living in a nuclear free world during his Prague speech in April of 2009, Obama has proposed continual funding for nuclear weapons. In his most recent budget for 2011, Obama requested more than $11.2 billion for the National Nuclear Security Administration—the agency that oversees nuclear weapons maintenance and production. The amount is a 13% increase in the agency's budget, and a greater amount than what was asked for under Bush. In a startling example of doublespeak, vice-president Biden attempted to reconcile Obama's rhetoric with his actions by commenting that "The president's Prague vision is central to this administration's efforts to protect the American people—and that is why we are increasing investments in our nuclear arsenal and infrastructure in this year's budget and beyond... No nation can secure itself by disarming unilaterally, but as long as nuclear weapons exist, all nations

▸ **IRAN,** continued on page 10

WORKS IN PROGRESS

ESTABLISHED IN 1990 BY THE THURSTON COUNTY RAINBOW COALITION

Works In Progress is a free, volunteer-operated progressive community newspaper based in Olympia, Washington. Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of *Works In Progress* and are solely those of the authors.

Submissions

Please send text as Word attachments. Artwork and photos can be sent electronically or we can scan them for you as camera-ready/black & white.

We value well-researched pieces that cover news stories that would be informative to readers in the South Sound. We value news and analysis over opinion pieces. We value submissions on stories that are misrepresented or ignored by mainstream media.

WIP reserves the right to publish in whole or part all submissions. For editing purposes, please enclose your phone number.

Articles may be reprinted. Please cite source.

If you don't see your issue being covered in Works In Progress*, it's because you aren't writing about it! (Or aren't finding someone else to cover it!)*

Send submissions to *olywip@gmail* or mail to Works In Progress, PO Box 295, Olympia, WA 98507-0295.

Governing Tool

The following statement is part of the Editorial Policy and is the governing tool for the Anti-Discrimination Clause:

> WIP *will make every effort to work with the contributor of material considered by* WIP *to be offensive in order to reach a mutually agreed upon resolution, but* WIP *reserves the right as a last resort to edit or not print submitted material.*

Mission Statement

"Our aim is to confront injustice and encourage a participatory democracy based on economic, social, and environmental justice. *Works In Progress* is dedicated to providing a voice for those most affected by the exclusionary and unfair practices that seek to silence the oppressed."

Anti-Discrimination Clause

We will collectively endeavor to be sensitive and respectful to all those oppressed in this society, and their issues. However, if and when we should make a mistake in this regard, we expect to acknowledge it and to express regret for injury or insult given.

Back Issues

Some issues are held in the Timberland Library system. *WIP* is archived on microfilm by the UW Library.

WORKERS IN PROGRESS

Colby Batts
Billy Bob Berryhill
Janet Blanding
Dave Campbell
Marylea Coday
Mike Coday
Renee Cruickshank
Wally Cuddeford
Christian DesMarets
Brendan Funtek
Ben Gus
Teresa Jennings
Margaret Love
Joshua Neuhouser
hali panneton
Sandia Slaby
Sylvia Smith
Jeff Sowers
Pat Tassoni
Ryan Tompkins
Berd Whitlock
Scott Yoos
and room for more...

Front cover photo: by Berd Whitlock

WIP Schedule

Submission Deadline:
March 19

PO Box 295
Olympia WA 98507

olywip@gmail.com
www.olywip.org

Proofreading:
March 26

(Be there for the first read!)

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WORKS IN PROGRESS

Any dictator would admire the uniformity and obedience of the US media. N Chomsky

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ANNOUNCEMENTS/EVENTS

WORKS IN PROGRESS LOOKING FOR DISTRIBUTORS

The **Works in Progress** distribution team is happy to say that two readers responded to last month's call out for new distribution volunteers. However, three long-time distributors recently retired, meaning our faithful distro crew is still looking for one or two more volunteers to take up their routes.

Please consider joining us as a distributor to drop off papers at various points throughout Olympia or the greater region if you have the means. Leave a message for Sandia at 360-970-2206 if you are interested in joining us. We're also interested in suggestions of places our paper should be distributed to. Thanks for reading!

20 Years of Works In Progress

Works in Progress is preparing for its 20th anniversary issue this coming May in grand style. Look to this spring and beyond for related fundraisers, collaboration with other local alternative media and other fun stuff.

We're seeking all past authors and long-time readers of WIP to share your perspective of the paper with us. If you have frequently written for us, we would love to hear again from you soon. We would also love to have a graphic designer and website coordinator work with us on our one-time project of releasing the 20th anniversary issue in print and online.
Contact olywip@gmail.com to join us for this momentuous event.

Seeking Accountability, Seeking Justice: Rachel Corrie Seven Years Later

Tuesday, March 16th, 6:30pm at the Urban Onion Ballroom, 116 Legion Way SE, Olympia

On the seventh anniversary of the death of Rachel Corrie--the Olympian woman crushed to death by an Israeli military Caterpillar bulldozer as she stood protecting a Palestinian family's home in Gaza—we come together to remember Rachel and to stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people who continue to suffer under Israeli occupation.

Please join us! We will begin the evening with a community potluck. Please bring a dish to share and enjoy with others. Beverages, utensils and plates will be provided.

The potluck will be followed by an overview of the journey seeking justice for Rachel's killing over the past seven years and an update on the civil court case that Cindy and Craig Corrie, Rachel's parents, have filed in Israel seeking accountability for Rachel's killing. The Corrie's will be in Israel during this time and we will get an update on the proceedings taking place.

We will also hear from our friends at the Rachel Corrie Youth and Cultural Center in Rafah and learn about their activities and remembrance of Rachel on this day. The evening will close with music by Olympia native Afrok and accompanying band.

Co-Sponsored by: Fellowship of Reconciliation, www.olyfor.org, and Islamic Circle of North America, www.icna.com. For more info contact Serena Becker at 360.754.3998 or serena@rachelcorriefoundation.org of The Rachel Corrie Foundation for Peace and Justice.

www.rachelcorriefoundation.org

POWER Outage - Brainstorming for change

Monday, April 5, 5:30-8 PM
First United Methodist Church, 1224 Legion Way SE

POWER Outage is a monthly get together in Olympia for POWER (Parents Organizing for Welfare and Economic Rights) and community members. It happens on the first Monday of each month, starting at 5:30 with a potluck, followed by a meeting at 6.

This April, join us for a conversation about possibilities for collaboration with caseworkers. We will be brainstorming ways we might work with DSHS caseworkers to change the broken system.

1224 Legion Way SE, First United Methodist Church. (This is not a church-related event.) Child care will be provided. For more info: please call POWER at 360-352-9716 or email welfarerights@riseup.net.

POWER fundraiser - Reader's Theater and hot homemade soup

Friday, April 2, 5:30-8 PM
Traditions Café, 300 5th Avenue, Downtown Olympia

Please join us for Reader's Theater and hot homemade soup! This is a fundraiser for POWER: Parents Organizing for Welfare and Economic Rights.

POWER is an organization of low-income parents and allies advocating for a strong social safety net while working toward a world where children and caregiving are truly valued and the devastation of poverty has been eradicated.

For more info: please call POWER at 360-352-9716 or email welfarerights@riseup.net. Find us on Myspace & Facebook!

Olympia Artesian Well Rock on Water! Benefict Concert

Friday, March 19, 7 PM - Doors open at 6:30
The Loft on Cherry Street, 508 Legion, Downtown

Danny Kelly, SJ Tucker, Tricky Pixie, and other guest musicians perform their unique Folk Rock Stylings to raise money to keep Olympia's Natural Artesian Well water free, open, and available to the public.

Tickets $10.00 in advance, $15.00 at the door the night of the concert. Tickets available now through buyolympia.com, at Traditions Café, and at Rainy Day Records. Or Send your tax deductible donation to Earthbound Productions/Procession of the Species with clear notation that they are for the Artesian Well Advocacy Benefit Concert.

For more information, contact radioray.wheelofwonder@gmail.com

Think Globally, Act Locally; Protect the natural human right to clean, natural drinking water and catch a great concert too!

Dana Visalli Afghanistan Presentation

Thursday, March 25, 5-7 PM
Downtown library, 313 8th Ave

Dana Visalli is peace activist from the Methow Valley. On Thursday March 25, from 5 to 7 pm, Dana will present a power-point about Afghanistan at the Olympia Library (313 8th Ave. SE Olympia, WA.) The presentation will include information from Dana's recent trip, from March 1—March 15, to Afghanistan. Also included will be background on political and economic aspects of Afghan society, and a focus on the topics the effects of war on women and children in Afghanistan.

For more information contact robertfwwhitlock@gmail.com. Please include Dana Visalli Afghanistan Presentation in the subject line.

Examining contemporary Western social and military strategies

Tuesday, March 30, 7 PM
Traditions Café, 300 5th Avenue, Downtown Olympia

Join us, Tuesday March 30th, for a conversation about US counterinsurgency, counterterrorism, and intelligence gathering in Iraq and Afghanistan. David Price and Steve Niva will speak about the new offensive the US launched in Afghanistan, as well as upcoming parliamentary elections in Iraq which could have serious implications for the future of the US presence there.

David Price is a professor of anthropology at St. Martin's University. He was recently featured on Democracy Now!, speaking about how anthropology programs at different universities are used in military intelligence gathering. Steve Niva is professor of international politics at the Evergreen State College, and lectures frequently on how contemporary military strategies are evolving.

Sponsored by the Olympia Movement for Justice and Peace. For more information, contact event organizer Jeffrey Berryhill at j_bhill@hotmail.com.

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Works In Progress Letter

Hello,
I enjoy reading WIP and I wanted to let you know that I liked the tribute to Howard Zinn. My family had been looking forward to his visit to Evergreen on Feb 6th, and we were very saddened by his death. Thank you for your write up on him. I wanted to check out your website and I got a warning on my computer regarding your site having malware, what is that about?. I want to know more about the Thurston County Rainbow Coalition.
Best Wishes,
Lydia Drescher

Lydia,

The Thurston County Rainbow Coalition was an affiliate of the national Jesse Jackson Rainbow Coalition. The local and the WA State organization folded about the same time the national organization was merged with Operation Push in the 1990s. Works In Progress was TCRC's former paper, but eventually took on a life of its own, and has outlasted TCRC by over a decade.

As for our website, www.olywip.org, alas, it has fallen into disrepair lately, amidst our reorganization last year and our 20th anniversary preparations this year. We're currently looking for a volunteer maintainer to keep our lovely site up and up-to-date for good.

Local organizing begins for US Social Forum in Detroit

The South Sound Social Forum (SSSF) is a new community group that's formed to prepare for the U.S. Social Forum in Detroit, Michigan, June 22-26. SSSF hopes to develop a cohesive regional collaboration that encompasses corresponding communities in the Thurston, Pierce, Lewis, Mason and Grays Harbor Counties.

There are wide-ranging benefits to local collaboration for the national Forum and multiple opportunities will be available for organizations and individuals to participate with SSSF. The 2007 U.S. Social Forum in Atlanta provided local organizers with invaluable contributions to both present issues in the South Sound that have national implications, war and militarization, labor rights, immigrant rights, womens rights, etc and fosters vital regional and nationwide networking for multiple organizations work in the following years.

From ussf2010.org: "The goal of the U.S. Social Forum (USSF) is to create a movement building process... The USSF provides spaces to learn from each other's experiences and struggles, share our analysis of the problems our communities face, build relationships, and align with our international brothers and sisters to strategize how to reclaim our world."

The U.S. Social Forum this June will likely present a wonderful opportunity to build from 2007's success. The SSSF is committed to forming a comprehensive representation of the local groups whether this work comes from facilitation through the workshop application process (the deadline is March 20 nationally) or, in lieu of potential inability to travel to the forum, representing your organization in whatever form deemed appropriate.

Internally, SSSF plans to work on local networking outreach, media production and transportation needs of people traveling to the forum from our area. SSSF is already actively reserving low-cost space and hopes to develop an Olympia-based caravan from a bus or series of coordinated carpools. SSSF is also looking into the potential for group rates on air flights and other assorted alternatives related to transportation and housing.

Externally, the major lead-up event in Olympia to the Social Forum is the Peoples' Assembly on Saturday, May 8. A series of workshops and presentations will provide an interactive, engaging representation of the resources available in Olympia from current organizations and the potential our town has to build upon these existing resources with more volunteer participation. The range of programs already lined up are multi-faceted (direct poverty concerns, bike repair, local disaster response and community gardening are just a few examples) and will give the people in the community an excellent building block toward empowering their presence in town. To set up a workshop for your organization, contact Larry Mosqueda at lmosqueda@comcast.net or Brendan Funtek at Moby Dick1980@aim.com.

For individuals not affiliated with any organization, SSSF encourages your participation even if you won't be able to attend the U.S. Forum. Along with attending the Peoples' Assembly, you can also join our Google Group at sssfg@googlegroups.com.

In the meantime, SSSFG will keep you updated with monthly developments in each *Works in Progress*.

Green Economy Series from the Green Party

The Economic Woes of Ordinary Americans

In the 1950's, economists triumphantly announced that America was "classless" – we were all middle class. Now we see a widening gap between the "haves" and the "have-nots." Consider how our institutions work to reinforce the divide, and whether a more just system is possible. Learn about our monetary system.

Saturday, March 6: Community Discussion of "The Economic Woes of Ordinary Americans." 2 to 5 PM, MIXX96 Meeting Room, corner of State and Washington, Olympia.

Wall Street Casino Running Amok

Banks in failure, mortgages foreclosed, people out of work. How would a liberated Wall Street translate into these effects? What happened? Learn about Wall Street's actions, the effects, and the assumptions made by those who might have regulated it. Critique the process.

Thursday, March 11, movies on "Wall Street Casino Running Amok." At Traditions Fair Trade Cafe, 300 5th Ave SW in downtown Olympia. Showing segments of "Capitalism: A Love Story" and "The Obama Deception." Event Number Five in the series A Green Economy, presented to the public by the Green Party of South Puget Sound

Community discussion of "Wall Street Casino Running Amok" will take place Wednesday, March 17, 6:30 to 9:30 PM, at Lincoln Elementary School, 213 21st Ave SE. What were financial institutions allowed to do, and what was the thinking? Event Number Six in the series A Green Economy, presented to the public by the Green Party of South Puget Sound

Regulating Wall Street

Wall Street has written its own rules up to now -- if we citizens had a say, what would we write? Can we keep the "free market" as a working hypothesis, and regulate it so that it works for ordinary citizens and not just a few wealthy financiers?

The movie "The Corporation" will show Monday, March 22, from 6:30 to 10 PM at the MIXX96 Meeting Room, corner of State and Washington in downtown Olympia. Prime yourself with ideas on how to regulate Wall Street, for a discussion later. Event Number Seven in the series A Green Economy, presented to the public by the Green Party of South Puget Sound.

Community discussion of "Regulating Wall Street" will take place Monday, March 29, from 7 to 10 PM, at Traditions Fair Trade Cafe, 300 5th Avenue SW in Olympia. Wall Street has been able to write its own regulation so far; if we citizens had a say, what would we write? Event Number Eight in the series A Green Economy, presented to the public by the Green Party of South Puget Sound.

In the SchNEWS . . .

COLUMBIA: STRUCK OIL

SchNEWS.org--A month-long protest against BP contractors in Colombia erupted in violence mid February as riot police attacked striking workers and locals.

The workers, striking for better pay and conditions, had been set to hold talks with employers on February 16. But on the 15th police moved in, breaking up the protest by beating workers with batons and riot shields and firing tear gas canisters, with scant regard for children making their way to school.

BP has been operating in the oil producing region of Casanare for more than 20 years. Until last year, the workers had no union, and right-wing paramilitary groups operating in the area imposed labour conditions and crushed dissent. Campesino and community leaders in the region that challenged that order were assassinated.

However, in 2009 the Oil Workers Union managed to establish a branch in Tauramena, where oil company OCENSA operate. OCENSA is owned by BP, Total and the Colombian state-owned Ecopetrol. The union has spent the last year supporting workers and the community in campaigns for better conditions - not easy work in the country where more union leaders are assassinated annually than in the rest of the world combined.

The British Colombia Solidarity Campaign group is urging people to tell BP what they think by emailing Executive Director and Group Chief Executive Tony Hayward at: tony.hayward@bp.com and to send their support to the workers at usopaz@yahoo.com.

GREEK PROTESTS BOOM AS THE ECONOMY BUSTS...

SchNEWS.org--Greece has once again been rocked by protests, strikes and civil unrest. This time in response to a series of swinging government cutbacks aimed at bringing the country into line with neo-liberal dogma and reducing its budget deficit. In response to proposed attacks on workers' rights and pensions, virtually the entire country came out on strike on Wednesday[February 24]. 30,000 marched through Athens and violently clashed with police. There is widespread anger at the government's attempts to deal with the economic crisis by dipping into the pockets of the poor. Marchers in Athens shouted, 'No sacrifices! Make the rich pay for the crisis!'

This is the second national strike to hit Greece in two weeks. The first, by public sector workers (almost 1 in 5 Greeks fall into this category), grounded flights and shut many state schools and offices.

The second general strike was far broader, all flights to and from Greece were cancelled and public transport ground to a near-standstill, with most trains and ferries standing idle. Schools, tax offices and council buildings remained closed. One group of metal-workers in Athens, satisfied that the strike at their own plant was rock-solid, went and blockaded their bosses' workplace and physically ejected them.

Europe's four poorest countries, Spain, Portugal, Ireland and Greece, are all facing similar programs designed to restore stability to the Euro. All are being forcefully encouraged by the EU big boys, with IMF backing, to introduce neo-liberal Thatcherite reforms, such as privatisation, raising of the pensionable age and cutting of public services. If Greece wants to stay in the Euro then it has to cut its budget deficit from 12.7% to 3%. These cuts will come at the expense of society's most marginalised.

NO FIN VENTURED, NUFFIN GAINED

SchNEWS.org--The interspecies environmental resistance movement is on. Total Oil have admitted that a lone eco-warrior swordfish launched a swift sabotaging attack on an oil loading pipe in Angola recently, causing a three day delay in tanker shipments.

The swashbuckling young swordfish had obviously been paying attention at er... school (and eating a diet rich in omega 3 fish oils no doubt). It was well briefed on Total's environmental misdeeds and humanitarian mishaps and prepared to back its eco-convictions to the hilt.

Literally. We're now holding out for dolphins with dynamite and porpoises with purpose wielding manta-ray-guns. Er...this article should have been funnier, but, on this occasion, the swordfish has proved mightier than the pen.

WEST BANK STORY

SchNEWS.org--The Israeli Army have stepped up their campaign against activists showing solidarity with Palestinians in the West Bank. On Sunday [February 7], IDF units raided a flat in Ramallah used by activists from the International Solidarity Movement. Ariadna Jove Marti from Spain and Bridgette Chappelle from Australia were arrested by the army and handed over to immigration authorities.

After protests from Spain's foreign ministry, the two were released when the Israeli Supreme Court ruled that the two's arrest was illegal as Israeli immigration authorities have no jurisdiction in the area.

Cohen and Shatz said the arrests were part of Israel's campaign to choke off the weekly demonstrations by Palestinians, left-wing Israelis and foreign activists against the separation barrier.

VICS
PIZZERIA
360.943.8044
233 Division St NW

The Olympia Free Herbal Clinic is open again!

The Clinic has a new office space in downtown Olympia.

Clinic hours are:

Tuesdays	**3 to 7 pm**
Wednesdays	**5 to 7 pm**
Thursdays	**3 to 7 pm**

In the White Building on 4th Avenue (across from the Reef and above Last Word Books) in Room 212. The entrance is to the right of Last Word Books. Our office is up the stairs, down the hall, and to the right.

Currently accepting applications for internships. Areas of focus include:

- Fundraising
- Donations and advertising
- Medicine
- Receptionist

Wish list:

- Medicine-making supplies
- Clean, empty tincture bottles
- Organically cultivated or ethically wild-crafted herbs
- Books on herbal medicine, anatomy&physiology, herb/drug interactions, etc.

FedEx Works with ICE to Detain Immigrant Workers

by Emmanuel López

Business, state working hand in hand to enforce racist policies

On Jan. 6, Immigration and Customs Enforcement special agents detained four Guatemalan immigrant workers at a FedEx store in Riviera Beach, Fla., after the immigrants had gone there to pick up newly issued passports from their home country.

FedEx had contacted two of the immigrants and told them they had packages waiting for them at FedEx's Riviera Beach location. When they arrived, they were told the packages could not be found and were asked to wait. In the meantime, FedEx officials contacted ICE agents, who arrived shortly thereafter and detained the two men.

Damaris Roxana Vasquez, 21, who had accompanied the two men to the FedEx store and was waiting for them in the car was also detained at gunpoint by ICE officials, along with her two-year-old son. Another Guatemalan immigrant who had come on his own was also detained.

"They pointed a gun at me, I felt a lot of fear. I started to cry, it's the first time something like this happened to me," Vasquez said. (El Sentinal, Jan. 23)

According to Vasquez, when another immigrant worker tried to escape from the scene, the agents fired a shot in the air. She was then placed in the back of a patrol car with her infant son. A total of two ICE units, two patrol cars, and eight officers were on the scene.

Two of the Guatemalan immigrants have already been deported. Vasquez now faces deportation proceedings. The fourth victim is being held at an immigration detention facility in Broward County also awaiting deportation proceedings.

FedEx calls ICE because of 'suspicious' packages

John De Leon, an attorney representing the Guatemalan government in the United States, told reporters: "These people were contacted [by FedEx] to go pick up their packages. ... That's the only reason they went to FedEx. The fact that the immigration authorities were available to detain these people clearly shows there was some coordination between FedEx and immigration authorities."

Addressing the issue of racial profiling, De Leon also stated, "The names on the packages were clearly Hispanic, they were all Guatemalans, so if there was profiling going on here, I think most people would find that very troubling." (South Florida CBS4, Jan. 15)

Back in November, officials at the Guatemalan consular office in Miami held a daylong session in Jupiter, Fla., to help Guatemalans in the area resolve problems with birth certificates, passports and other documents. Dozens of Guatemalans signed up for new or renewed passports, which are useful for workers to open up bank accounts and to carry out other day-to-day tasks.

When roughly 30 packages could not be delivered to the address listed, FedEx officials at the Riveria Beach store opened the packages. Allison Sobczak, a FedEx spokeswoman, said that officials then contacted ICE "to make sure the documents were legitimate." Several of the passports where subsequently seized by ICE. (New York Times, Jan. 18)

"Each foreign government has an obligation to provide their citizens with a passport and no foreign government should interfere with that process and that's what the U.S. government did and that's what FedEx did," stated De Leon. He also noted that ICE's actions may have violated various treaties and established laws that allow foreign governments the right to communicate with its citizens.

FedEx's justification for opening the packages was that they were "suspicious and undeliverable." However, FedEx successfully reached several Guatemalan immigrants.

'National security' used as pretext to persecute immigrant workers

These people were contacted [by FedEx] to go pick up their packages... That's the only reason they went to FedEx.

ICE spokeswoman Nicole Navas said agents responded to the FedEx office on Jan. 6 and began their own investigation by opening additional packages.

"Our agents were investigating whether these documents were legitimate," she said. "There are national security ramifications if these were fraudulent documents."

When asked by reporters to explain under what authority federal agents opened the FedEx envelopes, Navas said: "We have the authority to investigate any threats to our national security."

However, the only legitimate threat here comes from the collusion between ICE and FedEx to arrest four workers whose only crime was to come to this country to feed their families. The justification of ICE that they were investigating a "threat" to national security is just another example of a national trend of the federal agency oppressing immigrant communities and demonizing migrant workers forced to leave countries economically decimated by imperialist relationships.

FedEx, for its part, has also been a notorious enemy of working people. FedEx's contribution to the mailing industry has been to exploit its workers as much as possible, thereby undermining the union wages and conditions won by the U.S. postal and UPS workers.

Even after the Jan. 6 arrests, the Guatemalan consulate was not contacted by ICE. Consulate officials became aware of the situation only after local activists from the Palm Beach County Immigrant Rights Coalition notified them that people were getting arrested at FedEx and others were being notified to pick up their passports.

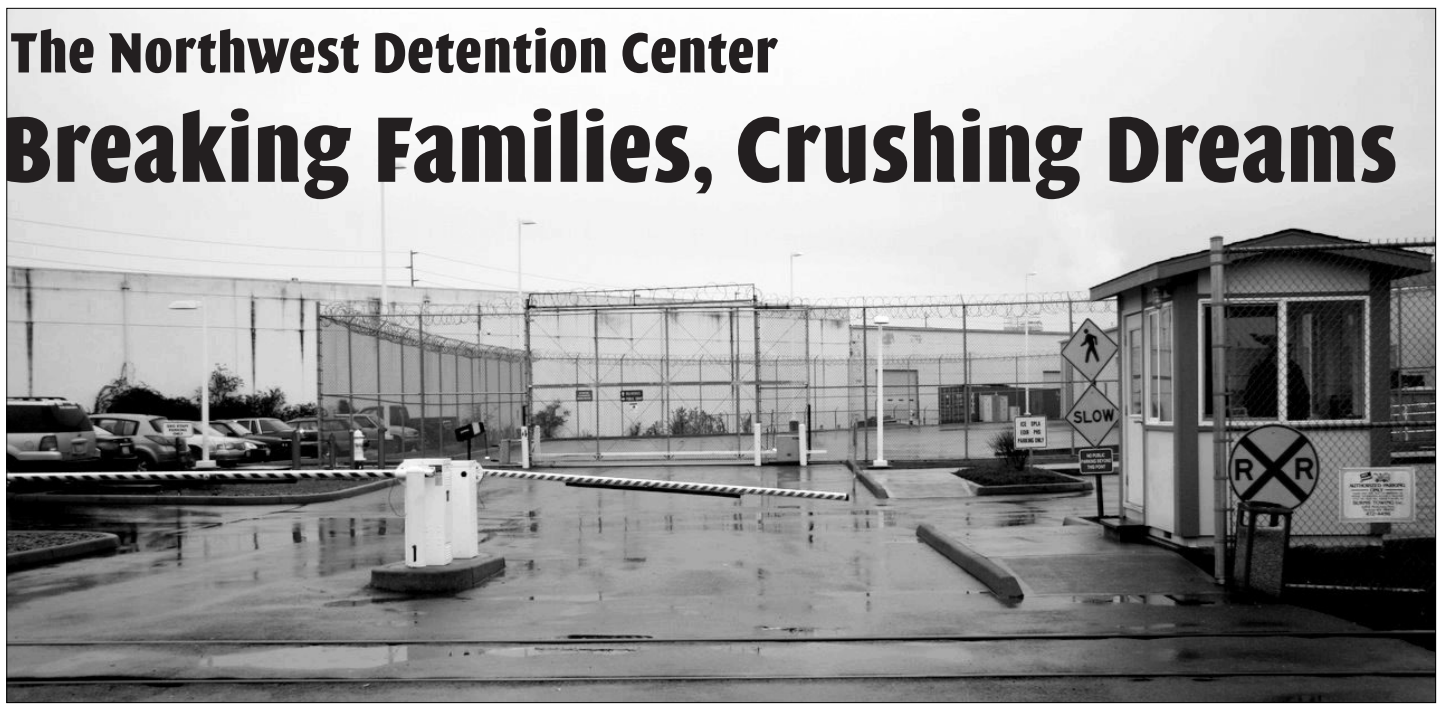
The government of Guatemala has issued a formal protest to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Department of Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano. It is also looking into filing a lawsuit against FedEx for possible violation of the Geneva Convention for interfering in the business between a foreign government and its citizens, as well as violations of the Fourth Amendment rights of the immigrant workers for opening their mail without a warrant.

The consulate has also ended all its contracts with FedEx. Immigrant rights activists and members of the large Guatemalan community in South Florida are discussing possible actions as well.

This article was originally posted on the Party for Socialism and Liberation website on Jan. 29.

The Northwest Detention Center

Breaking Families, Crushing Dreams



by Caitlin McNulty

A snide comment that stung a little too much. A careless shove, and some cussing.

That's all it took to take Julio, a high school senior, honor roll student, football player and loving son, away from his family, his community, and possibly even his country. Instead of a week's suspension from school, and maybe a few hours of community service, Julio has been taken to the Northwest Detention Center, isolated in Tacoma. He is facing deportation to Mexico, a country he has not been to since he came to the United States at the age of two with his family. A country where he has nothing and no one to go back to.

The Northwest Detention Center, hidden away in the outlying industrial zone of Tacoma, is a for-profit prison, run by the GEO group, a corporation that also runs one for the prisons at Guantanamo Bay.

I heard this story from Irmenia, Julio's mother. She and his father had driven from southern Oregon to see their son for the first time since he was detained two weeks earlier. But they had arrived five minutes after their scheduled visiting hours ended, and were told by a guard outside the prison's entrance to leave. In English. Translation wasn't available to tell the parents for a 17 year old boy that after a six hour drive they would not be able to see their child.

Irmenia's tears are the tears of a mother who is separated from her son, who knows he is behind the armed guards and barbed wire, already beyond her reach.

In many ways, Julio has already lost. Because he is undocumented, he does not have the right to a court appointed attorney. Even if his parents are able to afford a private attorney, the question will be whether or not he is documented. It will not take into account his success in school, participation in community activities, or his age when he crossed the border. Nor will the decision reflect how Julio's deportation would separate him from his family, his friends, his community, and his plans for the future.

The Northwest Detention Center, hidden away in the outlying industrial zone of Tacoma, holds so many more stories of separation and heartbreak. It is a for-profit prison, run by the GEO Group, a corporation that also runs one of the prisons at Guantanamo Bay. The current capacity is 1,000 beds, but the prison is planning an expansion to 1,500.

Those inside are incarcerated not for committing crimes, but for violating immigration policy. Like Julio, they have been forcibly removed from their communities, leaving their family members and lives behind. The detention center has a deplorable human rights record. A study completed by Seattle University School of Law and One America revealed gross human rights abuses. From hundreds of cases of food poisoning to the denial of medical care for expectant mothers to verbal abuse, the detention center endangers the lives of those incarcerated.

Those inside face other hardships while detained. Many inmates sign a voluntary deportation form upon arriving at the center, waiving the few rights they do have to a legal hearing. This results from the lack of translation available and the pressure those detained feel because of their imprisonment. Another problem is that of communication. Phone access is extremely limited and incredibly expensive. In many cases, those detained are not given phone access for several days, during which time their families do not know where their loved ones are, or even whether they are alive.

We must ask ourselves if we, as a society, want to invest in this human suffering or whether we want to come together and support our communities. Detaining and deporting those we claim are "illegal" will not fix the economic disasters caused by NAFTA and CAFTA, one of the primary reasons behind migration. Have we forgotten that we are a country of immigrants? We must come together to stop the institutionalized racism that is allowing members of our community to be jailed and deported. After all, no human being is illegal.

Caitlin is a student and organizer in Olympia. If you would like to learn more about the move for immigration reform in Olympia and how you can get involved, visit the Bridges Not Walls website (http://www.oly-wa.us/bridges/).

I'm a Better Anarchist Than You

Some Thoughts on Vancouver and the Black Bloc

by David Rovics

I love a good riot. The distant sound of things breaking, the smoke billowing from whatever is burning, the young men and women busily smashing whatever they can find into fist-sized pieces, launching the objects over the heads of their fellow rioters (if all goes well) and into the ranks of the black-clad police with their Ninja Turtle armor, translucent plastic shields and their array of far more sophisticated weaponry. I love the scent of tear gas (if I'm just on the outskirts of the cloud), it's exhilarating, the scent of possibility, of the situation's volatility, the thrilling uncertainty. The excitement of seeing the barricades get lit on fire, knowing that no police vehicle, no matter how well-armored, is going to drive through that.

They're going to have to put the fire out first, and until they manage to get some big hoses to the scene (which might require the participation of the fire department, which might not want to participate), this is our block. Maybe the police even retreat a couple times under particularly heavy volleys of rocks and bottles, the crowd surges and cheers, meanwhile the more experienced rioters stay busy gathering wheelbarrows full of more things to throw at the cops, knowing they'll be back soon. My neighbor says it's because I'm an Aries, but whatever it is, if I find myself in the midst of such a situation, the memories are all fond ones of the rush and the togetherness of the moment. It's a warm, fuzzy feeling, really.

However, most people in most of the countries with which I'm fairly familiar – the US, Canada, England, Germany, Denmark, Australia, Japan – don't feel that way. For most people I meet, riots are scary things and they don't care or notice much whether it was a chain store's windows smashed or a local one, whether only SUV's were torched or hybrids, too, whether any passersby got hurt in the process or not. The major news outlets don't pay much attention to what the underlying reasons for the rioting are – just enough about the situation for people to associate the riot with the cause and the cause with scary people who aren't like them.

I've been home in Portland over the past couple weeks, not in Vancouver for the Olympics and the accompanying protests that tend to materialize when a gigantic corporate event and the international media covering it rolls into (and over) the town. By European standards the event the media was focusing on sounds like it was a pathetic little riot, a few smashed windows and overturned newspaper boxes, but it managed to attract the lion's share of Canadian and even international media coverage, as usual – it's sensational, but more than that it serves the purposes of corporate media outlets who, for political reasons, want to make most protesters look bad and don't want people going out to rock the boat in the first place.

By my informal count traveling around, I'd say that most people in many countries are afraid to go to protests, even if their sympathies are with those protesting. They're afraid of what they've heard in the media about how things get out of control. They'd rather avoid lines of police in riot gear, and they feel unsafe at the thought that what they believed was going to be a nonviolent event might suddenly get scary when a small group of people decide to start throwing rocks through store windows.

> The major news outlets don't pay much attention to what the underlying reasons for the rioting are - just enough about the situation for people to associate the riot with the cause and the cause with scary people who aren't like them.

Some of the rock-throwing anarchists (as opposed to the far more numerous non-rock-throwing variety of anarchists) will now ask, who cares? Who cares if lots of people are afraid to come to protests because of us? They're "liberals" anyway (anyone who doesn't support your right to riot is a liberal, in case you didn't know).

But here's the thing: we need a mass movement, and contrary to what certain popular primitivist authors like to say, a few thousand dedicated people are not going to accomplish much of anything, let alone revolutionary change, without the support of a mass movement. That is, whatever tactics you're using to organize resistance groups of any kind, the tactics need to be ones that don't completely alienate the general public (very much including the "liberals"). And the general public tends to be freaked out by groups of people committing acts of violence (or forms of property destruction that seem violent to them). In recent decades lots of people in lots of places have embraced all kinds of militant and often effective tactics – strikes, bus boycotts, sit-ins, building take-overs, nonviolent civil disobedience of all kinds. Those of any political persuasion who would say that tactics like these are universally ineffective are simply ignorant.

Equally, there have been some pretty darn effective movements that have employed violence around the world over the past few decades and centuries, and you'd have to be an extremely ideological pacifist not to recognize that. But these movements that have employed violent means have used a lot more than rocks. It takes a pretty desperate situation (say, Cuba in 1959) for movements like that to garner popular support, and there's not a serious guerrilla movement anywhere that wouldn't admit that the fish need the sea in which to swim, or they quickly die.

In the context of most modern, relatively well-off countries, it seems quite evident that rioting – even if it's not much of a riot – only impedes anyone's efforts at building a movement. It is, in fact, a much-used strategy of the police, as we've seen time and time again certainly throughout North America, Europe and elsewhere. I have no doubt that the first rock thrown is thrown by an undercover cop at least half the time in most situations. I also have no doubt that most of the young people participating in Black Bloc and advocating for "diversity of tactics" (translation: "don't tell me not to throw rocks, you oppressive, ageist liberal carnivore!") are well-meaning people doing a lot of good work in their communities when they're not throwing rocks through windows. But whether or not they want to believe it, when they start throwing rocks during a march they are doing exactly the same work as the police provocateurs – I mean literally, not figuratively.

Black Bloc: doesn't this make you wonder about what the fuck you're doing?

David Rovics is a singer/songwriter of songs of social significance. He is a professional flat picking rabble rouser who makes the revolution irresistible. He is appearing on Friday, March 5 at Traditions Fair Trade Cafe at 8 pm.

A response and some thoughts on Rovics' ideas from a local anarchist

by Arthur Miller

There are some interesting comments in Rovics' article. Here is how I see it as a long time anarchist. First there are two types of so-called riots. There are those that are spontaneous eruptions of rage. It is not really a question of tactics or of a social movement, but rather an inevitable social reality. For example, the riots after King was murdered. The other type of so-called riots are those used as a tactic.

There are two types of tactics. They include those that are proactive to build a movement or win concessions, and those that are reactive against something. which at best are little more than a protest.

There are different types of anarchists. Those that seek, by different ways, to create an anarchist society, and those that use the anarchist label as a means to protest what they don't like.

There are those anarchists that are caught-up in unrealistic idealism or fantasies that will never work. For one thing, anarchism cannot come about through the actions of small groups or individuals because freedom or liberty as a social way of life must come from a great mass of people. Otherwise, you just have a small group of people trying to impose themselves on others, and that ain't freedom.

So among those anarchists who are trying to create a new world, their ability to do that is based upon their tactics. Those tactics need to do two things: have a chance to win concessions while at the same time bring in as many new people to anarchism as possible.

So-called riots do have their place when the people are so outraged that they need to express it in that way. What I mean by people are communities of large numbers of people. But to riot just as a means of protest of a few - that is offensive to the many and only marginalizes anarchism as nothing more than a liberal form of elitist protest. I call it liberal because, at best, protest alone can only reform the way the government does things. It does not, without direct organizing to build a movement, do anything to create anything different, and thus it is not revolutionary.

Thus, these actions do little more than reduce anarchism to being nothing more than a protest.

I know some anarchists like to beat their chest like King Kong about how "militant" they are when they riot, as if militancy is based upon how much violence or destruction you can cause. If that were the case, then the U.S. Government would be the most militant body in history. In my view, militancy is an uncompromising action meant to create an effect for social change, in real terms. Just breaking windows and whatnot has no effect on the system. The windows don't cost that much and are easily replaced. It also seems that getting arrested is to some a great thing. There have been times when it did have an impact, but just getting arrested often has no impact. Believe me, I have been arrested 26 times. Fact is that the cops arrest people for a living. It is like asking a cab driver to drive a cab.

The real effect of actions is what we need to look at. I remember once when a group of people went after a McDonald's and were banging on the windows. Inside I saw no great capitalists, but rather low paid workers and a few people eating there. I doubt many high and mighty rich folks eat there. But I do remember one older Black woman with a look of fear on her face. Was she the enemy? Were those low paid workers the enemy? The effect of that action created fear in those people. If those people are your enemy, then count me with them! Damn, a bunch of middle-class white kids attacking poor folks, what the hell difference is there between that and the damn system!

With all this said, I have seen Black Blocs do good things. I remember once down in L.A. when the cops were attacking a march and a Black Bloc placed themselves between the cops and the other marchers and the cops backed down when they realized that they were facing an organized group that they could not push around.

By WIP co-editor Wally Cuddeford:

There are many valid criticisms of the black bloc, and David and Arthur both touch on many of those. However, one critique often levied against the black bloc is that they're predominantly (or sometimes, that they're exclusively) white, male, and middle-class. Part of our mission statement at WIP requires we not be misunderstood as dismissing the agency of those oppressed people who choose to participate in black bloc activities.

Do you have any thoughts on the subject? Any experiences you'd like to share? Send us your feedback to olywip@gmail.com for next month's WIP Letters!

Rally to Protect Our Future

by Berd Whitlock

Olympia, WA — On Monday, February 15, an estimated six thousand people gathered on the steps of the Washington State Capitol Legislative Building. They rallied was for the Environment, for Education, and for Labor - as well as against budget cuts that would hurt people.

A large number of people advocated for single-payer health care as well as substantial reform to the tax system. Washington State has the most regressive tax structure of any state in the USA. Some of the proposals in the legislature, such as sales taxes increases, would actually make the tax system even more unfair.

Many of the speeches addressed the need to protect the social safety net, to maintain structures that make society a caring place, and to focus on fairness, equity and justice in the areas of labor, environment, and education.

After the rally I attended a Sisters Organizing for Survival (SOS) meeting. SOS is part of the Radical Women organization. This group is currently organizing an effort toward a progressive state income tax. During the meeting people talked about their experiences at the rally and lobbying for a couple bills that would establish an income tax in the state.

Washington State has the most regressive tax structure of any state in the USA. The poorest pay 17% of their income in taxes, while the richest pay a mere 3%. During the SOS meeting, organizer Megan Cornish mentioned concern that, although the speeches were rousing and raised some good points, none of the speakers at the rally talked about how to raise revenue.

The current situation is unstable. SOS advocates for graduated income taxes and taxes on corporate profits. It was mentioned that in relatively recent decades the federal tax rate on the highest income bracket had been at about 90%. Currently, the federal tax rate for the wealthy is about 35%, and after all the loop-holes those in the highest bracket often pay even less than that. One concept is for the state to make up the difference between the federal income tax rate and the 90% level for those in the highest bracket with the most income. This especially makes sense in light of the federal government's failure to uphold its end of responsible budgeting and funding for necessary services and social supports.

SOS has been making demands for public hearings on Senate Bills 6250 and 6147.

SB 6250 would establish a graduated personal income tax and reduce state sales and property taxes. SB 6147 would establish a flat 1% tax on people earning more than $500,000 a year. This money would be earmarked for education.

SOS is asking people to contact members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee with their concerns.

Urge them to:

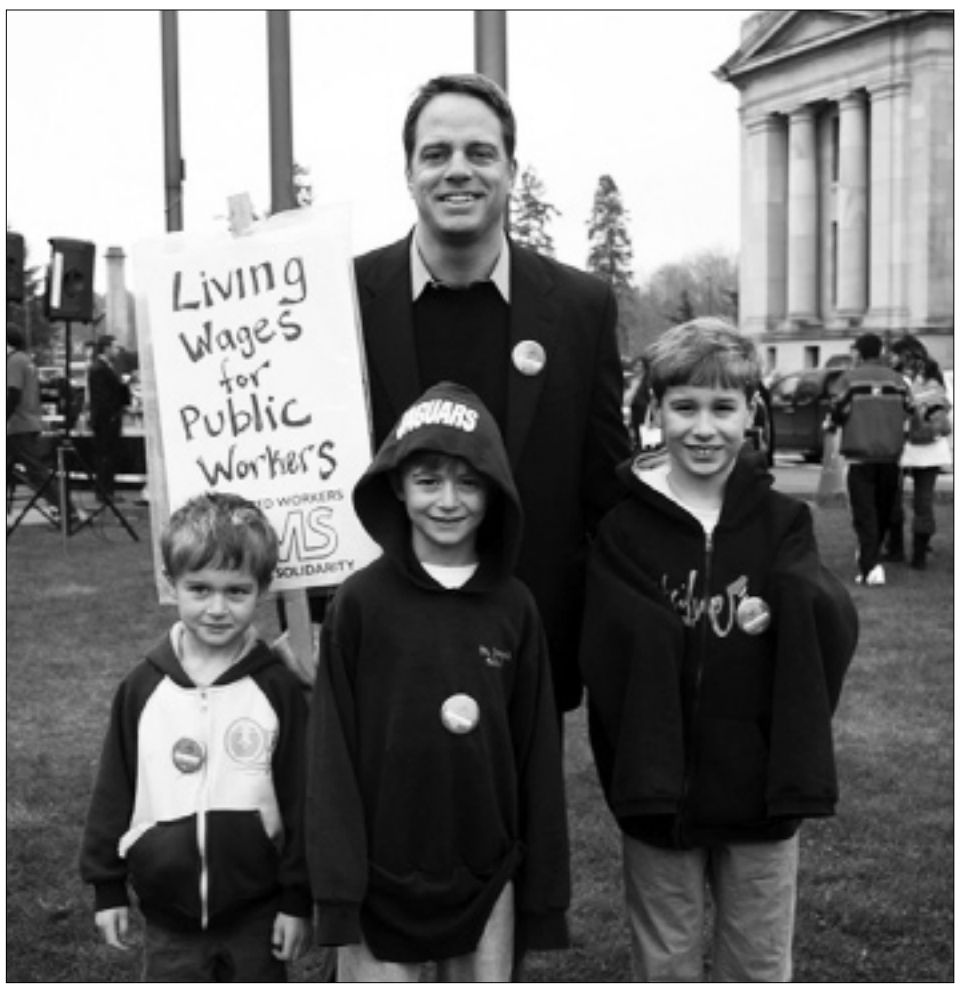
- Hold public hearings on 6250 and 6147
- Institute a steeply graduate income tax on millionaires, and tax corporate profits
- Fully fund Basic Health, education and other vital services!

Senator Margarita Prentice
360-786-7616 (phone); 360-786-1999 (fax)
prentice.margarita@leg.wa.gov

Senator Karen Fraser
360 786-7642 (phone); 360-786-1999 (fax)
fraser.karen@leg.wa.gov

Senator Rodney Tom
360-786-7450; 360-786-7450 (fax)
tom.rodney@leg.wa.gov

Photos: Berd Whitlock



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the rich and corporate profits
Sisters Organize for Survival
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1,600,000
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MAJORITY VOTES FOR CLEAN ENERGY
KIDS NOT CUTS
KIDS NOT CUTS
11,000
STUDENTS NEED AID, NOT DEBT!
Veteran Students
LOCAL 17
IFPTE
WE ARE THE SAFETY NET!
Bailout
yes on revenue
WHAT will happen when
PROTECT
KIDS NOT
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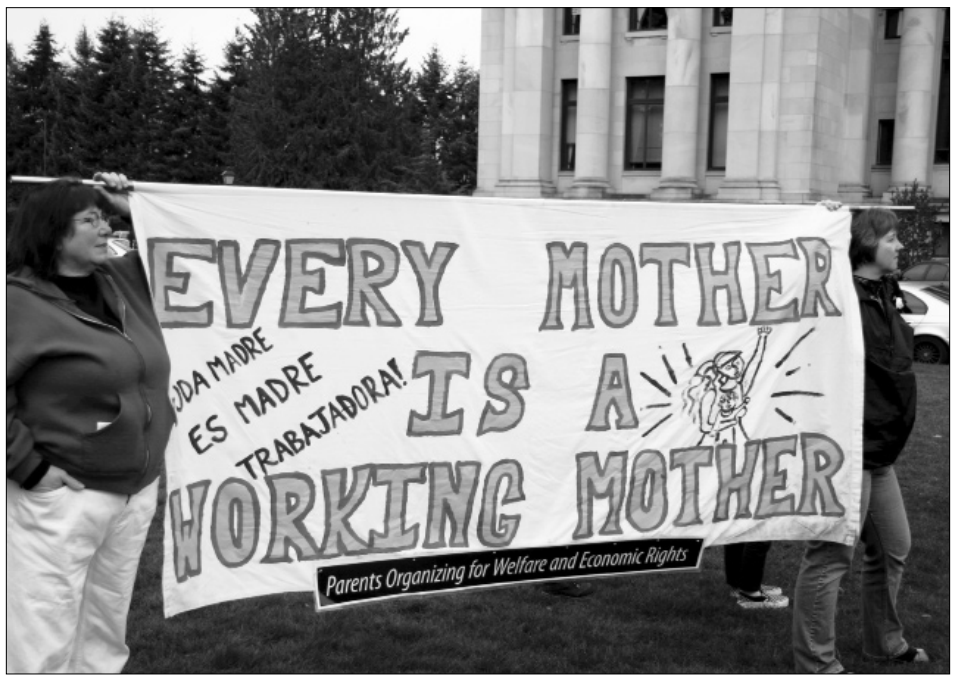
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Campaign to Legalize Democracy Blows Through Olympia

Facing down the suicide economy and taking on corporate personhood

by Mike Coday

David Cobb and Riki Ott came and talked with South Sounders at Orca Books on March 2.

David is an attorney, community activist and 2004 Green Party candidate for President. Riki is a PhD fisheries scientist who was living and working at Ground Zero on Prince William Sound when the Exxon Valdez ran aground and spilled it's crude cargo into the fragile economy and ecosystem in 1989.

These two are on the campaign trail to amend the US Constitution to abolish corporate personhood in the wake of the Supreme Court's outrageous decision that will come to be known as Citizens United. Some Supreme Court decisions are so important that they enter the common lexicon, some for their rightness – Roe v. Wade and Brown v. Board of Education come to mind – and some for their wrongness, like Dred Scott or Plessy v. Ferguson. Citizens United is clearly going to make it into the second category.

David Cobb told the crowd at Orca that he actually welcomed the clarity of the Citizens United decision. This Supreme Court decision emphatically extended almost unlimited authority for corporations to spend money on US elections. Thus, they saved activists a decade of work that would otherwise have been needed to focus people's attention on the need to defeat corporate personhood.

Audience members questioned the wisdom of taking on a monumental task like constitutional amendment and recalled the struggle and finally unsuccessful campaign to pass the Equal Rights Amendment in the 1970s. The speakers responded to this question by asking everyone to remember the huge shift toward gender consciousness, Betty Friedan's launching of second wave feminism that is still at work today, and the real changes that occurred even as the Equal Rights Constitutional Amendment finally came to a halt short of ratification numbers. Both speakers also encouraged the audience to believe in the possibility that something new may be afoot today in the body politic in response to the environmental and economic crises that we face and that change and movement might happen at a rapid pace. We were reminded that in the Civil War era three separate Constitutional Amendments were passed, including the critical 14th Amendment that codified equal protection for citizens in a way that has been a linchpin for much of the progress in civil rights that has occurred in the past century. Cobb and Ott put distance between themselves and this project and any power-structure based changes to corporate personhood that have arisen in the month since Citizens United was decided. Cobb identified himself as a true believer, a community organizer who has decided this is the time and the place for change to occur from the bottom-up. He and Ms. Ott came prepared with an array of tools and methods to help local community activists organize themselves to create local change, local resolutions and ordinances regarding corporate personhood with the hope and dream that a groundswell of local activity will create national change and force the decision makers in the other Washington to bend to the will of the people.

Ott and Cobb explained triple bottom line accounting, a recognition of three kinds of wealth – social wealth, environmental wealth, and economic wealth – that need to be considered when communities make decisions about what kind of industries will build healthy, happy and sustainable economies and what kinds of industries – war, arms export, prison, health care focused on sickness profitability - are completely skewed to economic wealth and will consume social and environmental wealth in a drive to maximize economic wealth. The economic wealth maximization path is also know as the Suicide Economy. Ms. Ott reminded the audience that under single bottom line accounting, the grounding of the Exxon Valdez in Prince William Sound was the single most productive oil tanker trip in world history. The cleanup and litigation economic activities that followed the disaster, which decimated fisheries and livelihoods, is simply more economic activity. There is no accounting in the Suicide Economy for the losses of environmental and social wealth that occur when an ecosystem is destroyed.

It was a rousing and joyous presentation that sent the seated and standing room crowd at Orca away with energy and an inkling about how to proceed against corporate personhood in the South Sound. The local battle against the Suicide Economy, the influence of corporate money in local politics, the values of social and environmental wealth in balance with economic wealth were on display in November when Olympia elected a City Council that is friendly and supportive of triple bottom-line accounting. The Isthmus battle that has taken place in South Sound over the past several years has already created an activist infrastructure, a grassroots movement that is a political force. Cobb and Ott would have us consider local action to abolish corporate personhood, to limit the money that corporations can spend to influence elections and elected officials as a worthy undertaking. Works in Progress has been covering the problem of corporate personhood now for many years. In the wake of Citizens United, with energetic and knowledgeable people like David Cobb and Riki Ott out on campaign trail, we can hope there is a new wind blowing across the land, and it's not New Wind Inc.

To join the fray, jump to www.MoveToAmend.org and sign the petition.

Oh, come on, can't you think of one good thing that Exxon Mobil has done for Prince William Sound? (not the actual exchange, but what the heck) Photo by Marylea Coday

ReclaimDemocracy takes on corporate personhood

by ReclaimDemocracy.org

This article was previously printed in the September 2005 issue of Works In Progress.

Ask a friend or colleague to define the term "corporation". Most will define it as a large company with limited liability. Ask if corporations should be defined as persons, with the same rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness as the rest of us, and you might just get some laughs.

The truth, unfortunately, is hardly a laughing matter. Thanks to an 1886 Supreme Court misappropriation*, today's corporations enjoy many of the very same human protections and privileges as you and I. Add these legally defensible and even exploitable constitutional rights to a corporation's endless financial resources, media control and limited liability privileges, and the makings to overthrow democracy unfold.

While many Americans do not yet realize the extent to which corporate power controls our lives, corporate control over the governed is in some cases beginning to make itself obvious:

1.Today's free speech laws virtually enable corporations to buy votes; Since free speech was equated with money in the 1970's, it has become unlawful to limit the amount of money a corporation can contribute to a campaign. Corporations hold that doing so would limit their constitutional right to "free" speech.

2.A direct consequence to the above, taxpayer money is increasingly being spent in areas that benefit corporations and their wealthy counterparts to the detriment of the public at large; While weaponry and war spending is skyrocketing, and while enormous tax breaks are being handed out to rich corporations and the super-wealthy, the educational and social services necessary to sustain the public are being under-funded or slashed. Similarly, domains that have long belonged to the public are being "privatized" or, in other words, handed over to the highest corporate bidder.

3.Corporations are successfully suing local governments that pass laws to control corporate behavior in their communities. The corporations charge that the townships, cities or states in question are violating their "constitutional rights" as "persons" under the first and fourteenth amendments.

4.Corporations also challenge local communities by manipulating federal law in their favor; In California, the Bush Administration actually joined a lawsuit brought against the state by General Motors and Daimler Chrysler, charging that by regulating car emissions California is trying to regulate fuel economy -- something only the federal government has the authority to do. (An agreement was reached and the suit was dropped, but in 2004 another California law requiring new automobiles to emit fewer greenhouse gases was challenged in federal court. The case, which was brought in part by the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers, is pending.)

5.Corporations use their "right to privacy" and their "right to unlawful searches and seizures" to keep government inspectors off their property, sometimes until it is too late to prevent what become serious violations of environmental law. In terms of lives, dollars, or both, the damage then

▸ **CONTINUED** on next page

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becomes the public's problem.

6.A recent Supreme Court ruling on Eminent Domain set a precedent that makes it legal for municipalities to force homeowners to sell their property if it is found to be in the "economic interest" of the city. In the words of former Justice Sandra Day O'Conner, "Any property may now be taken for the benefit of another private party, but the fallout from this decision will not be random. The beneficiaries are likely to be those citizens with disproportionate influence and power in the political process, including large corporations and development firms."

While the list of corporate abuses is long and daunting, it is important to remember that America's corporations have not always been allowed this kind of reign over our lives. In fact, the revolution that led to our country's founding was as much a revolution against corporations like England's infamous East India Company, which used force to monopolize the colony's market, as it was against the crown itself. Early America was very careful with the powers it granted corporations, and created laws that among other things limited corporate life-spans, revoked charters when necessary, made it illegal for corporations to own other companies, and insisted that, in addition to making money, a corporation had to operate in the public interest.

Over the years, corporations have successfully pushed for laws that have created an overwhelming imbalance of power in their favor: Today's corporations have no limitations put on their "life-spans", but live on and on until they fold or declare bankruptcy; while most states still have the authority to revoke corporate charters, charter revocation has been virtually unheard of in the 21st century. (This even though a 1982 study found that 23 percent of America's largest 500 companies were either convicted of criminal behavior or forced to pay a penalty of more than $50,000 for serious misbehavior during the previous decade*). Today's corporations are not only allowed to own other companies, they are allowed to own subsidiaries as a means to funnel money and evade taxes. Finally, the notion that corporations must operate for the public good in addition to maximizing profits has largely been lost, while their limited liability status -- originally granted to them because they served the public interest -- remains intact. Unaccountable to their creditors, to the environment and to the communities in which they operate, today's corporations are allowed unparalleled power and influence over our lives. Democratic rule by, for and of "the people" is becoming more rhetoric than reality, and corporate policies are dominating America's agenda.

But in a country that values democracy, where free and fair elections are demanded, it is possible to return to an era where corporations are subservient to the people who created them. A major grassroots movement to abolish Corporate Personhood is under way, and citizens all across America -- liberals and conservatives, activists, farmers and small business owners - are getting together to enact local laws to control the behavior of the corporations that do business in their communities.

Returning corporations to their rightful place in the legal world -- defining them as superficial entities designed by people to make money, as opposed to "persons" with inherent rights and privileges-will take significant time, energy and vision. But just as the emancipation and women's suffrage movements found support and ultimate triumph, so too might the justice of this cause one day prove undeniable to American values of decency and equality.

For more information on Corporate Personhood, visit the following sites:

- ReclaimDemocracy.org http://www.reclaimdemocracy.org/
- Program on Corporations, Law and Democracy http://www.poclad.org
- Women's International League of Peace and Freedom (WILPF) http://www.wilpf.org/

*For information on how Corporate Personhood has been predicated on a court reporter's misleading headnote rather than on an actual Supreme Court ruling, read Thom Hartmann's book "Unequal Protection."

Harvard fellow calls for genocidal measure to curb Palestinian births

A fellow at Harvard University's Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Martin Kramer, has called for "the West" to take measures to curb the births of Palestinians, a proposal that appears to meet the international legal definition of a call for genocide.

Kramer, who is also a fellow at the influential Washington Institute for Near East Policy (WINEP), made the call early this month in a speech at Israel's Herzliya conference, a video of which is posted on his blog ("Superfluous young men," 7 February 2010).

In the speech Kramer rejected common views that Islamist "radicalization" is caused by US policies such as support for Israel, or propping up despotic dictatorships, and stated that it was inherent in the demography of Muslim societies such as Yemen, Iraq, Afghanistan and the Israeli-occupied Gaza Strip. Too many children, he argued, leads to too many "superfluous young men" who then become violent radicals.

Kramer proposed that the number of Palestinian children born in the Gaza Strip should be deliberately curbed, and alleged that this would "happen faster if the West stops providing pro-natal subsidies to Palestinians with refugee status."

> "What Kramer is essentially calling for is population control by starvation. If you really want to control population growth, you do it through development, not by starving the children of refugees."
> Felix de Rosen, Palestinian Solidarity Committee

Due to the Israeli blockade, the vast majority of Palestinians in Gaza are now dependent on UN food aid. Neither the UN, nor any other agencies, provide Palestinians with specifically "pro-natal subsidies." Kramer appeared to be equating any humanitarian assistance at all with inducement for Palestinians to reproduce.

He added, "Israel's present sanctions on Gaza have a political aim -- undermine the Hamas regime -- but if they also break Gaza's runaway population growth, and there is some evidence that they have, that might begin to crack the culture of martyrdom which demands a constant supply of superfluous young men." This, he claimed, would be treating the issue of Islamic radicalization "at its root."

The 1948 UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, created in the wake of the Nazi holocaust, defines genocide to include measures "intended to prevent births within" a specific "national, ethnic, racial or religious group."

The Weatherhead Center at Harvard describes itself as "the largest international research center within Harvard University's Faculty of Arts and Sciences." In addition to his positions at Harvard and WINEP, Kramer is "president-designate" of Shalem College in Jerusalem, a far-right Zionist institution that aspires to be the "College of the Jewish People."

Pro-Israel speakers from the United States often participate in the the Herzliya conference, an influential annual gathering of Israel's political and military establishment. This year's conference was also addressed by The New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman and, in a first for a Palestinian official, by Salam Fayyad, appointed prime minister of the Ramallah-based Palestinian Authority.

Kramer's call to prevent Palestinian births reflects a long-standing Israeli and Zionist concern about a so-called "demographic threat" to Israel, as Palestinians are on the verge of outnumbering Israeli Jews within Israel, and the occupied Palestinian territories combined.

Such extreme racist views have been aired at the Herzliya conference in the past. In 2003, for example, Dr. Yitzhak Ravid, an Israeli government armaments expert, called on Israel to "implement a stringent policy of family planning in relation to its Muslim population," a reference to the 1.5 million Palestinian citizens of Israel.

This report is from The Electronic Intifada, and was originally published 22 February 2010. http://electronicintifada.net

Co-founder of Electronic Intifada coming to Olympia!

Ali Abunimah is a Palestinian-American journalist and co-founder of the Electronic Intifada, a not-for-profit, independent online publication about the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict. A graduate of Princeton University and the University of Chicago, Abunimah authored One Country: A Bold Proposal to End the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict.

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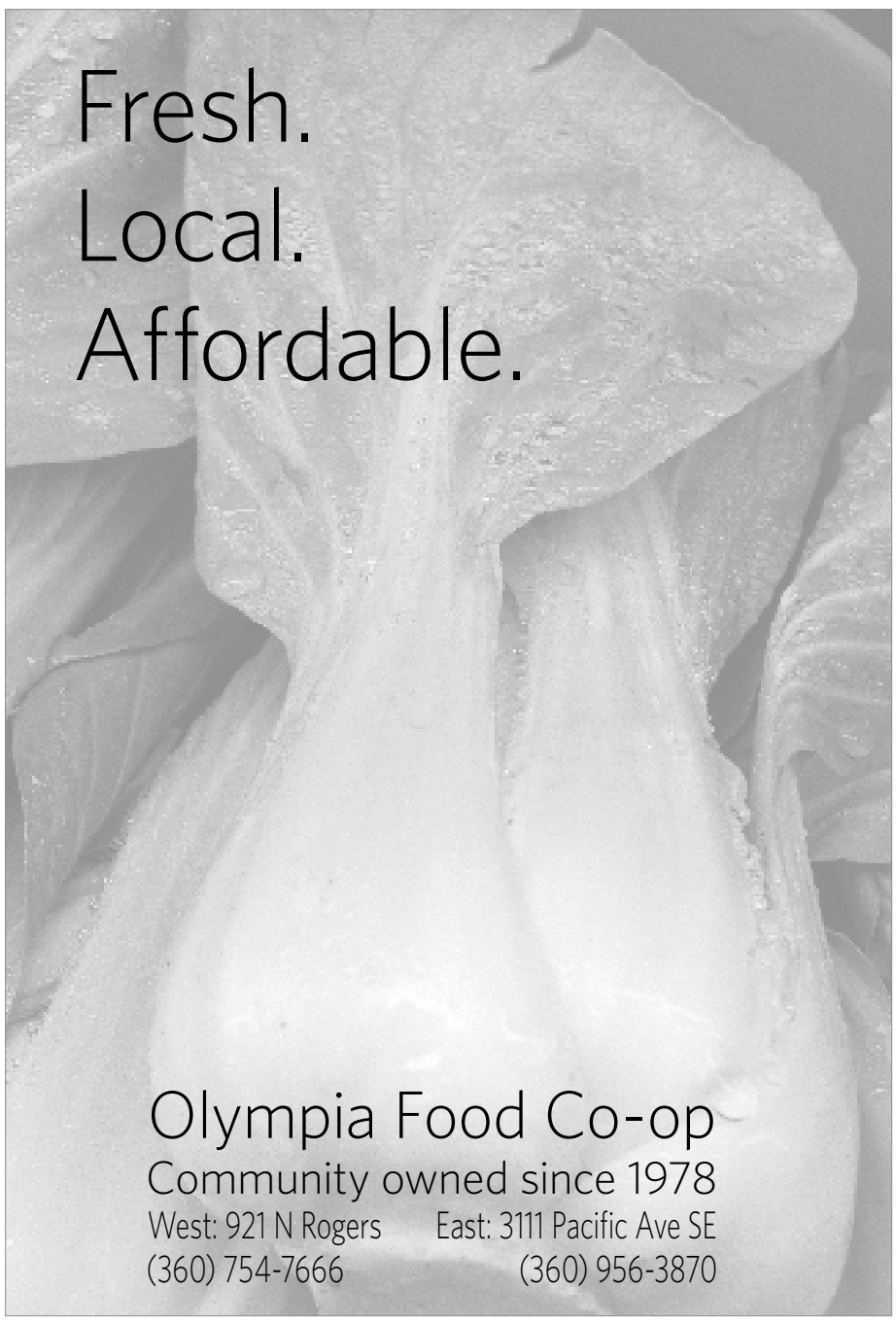

GI Voice and Coffee Strong receive grant

GI Voice wishes to thank one of their sponsors, RESIST, for a grant of $3,000. GI Voice received the funding to maintain Coffee Strong, the GI coffeehouse located in Lakewood, just off I-5 at Exit 122. Coffee Strong is a safe space for service members, military families and veterans to address hardships of military life. Issues include referrals for PTSD, sexual trauma, deployment, health services, assistance with applications for VA benefits, and GI Rights counseling.

Coffee Strong offers events for soldiers and often includes the larger community. Recently, Coffee Strong hosted Elizabeth Stinson and Tanya Brannon, both experts in Military Sexual Trauma and domestic violence, to speak to these important issues.

RESIST began in 1967 in support of draft resistance and opposition to the Vietnam War. RESIST's small grants and loans are made to grassroots groups engaged in activist organizing and educational work for social change. RESIST defines organizing as collective action to challenge the status quo. They support strategies that build community, encourage collaborations with other organizations, and increase skills or access to resources. They seek to produce leadership from the constituency directly affected, which is exactly what Coffee Strong is about.

One challenge GI Voice addresses is one of supporting soldiers and veterans with a transition back to civilian life. A goal is to create part-time transitional employment opportunities that allow them time to seek health and mental services while working part-time in a low-stress environment.

"Each year, RESIST funds groups like GI Voice, because our mission is to support people who take a stand about the issues that matter today, whether it's to resist corporate globalization, promote a woman's right to choose, or develop activist leaders," says Board Chair Kay Mathew. "And we believe it's especially important to help grassroots organizations that might be too small or too local—or too radical for mainstream foundations."

Funeral March for College Funding

by Jeff Berryhill

On March 4th the Coalition for a Fair Budget, organizing from the Evergreen State College, held a funeral mourning the death of public education. The ceremony began at the college in Red Square, where students and staff read eulogies for higher education. Organizers for the event hoped to use the vivid imagery of a funeral to illustrate the difficulties facing students who want to continue their education in the future. As a result of budget shortfalls stemming from the economic crisis, tuition rates are set to be raised substantially in the next few years, making higher education even more costly. In fact, these hikes will mean that students will contribute a greater percentage towards operating costs (through tuition) than the state for the first time in history, marking what the Coalition contends is the "death of public education."

At the conclusion of the ceremony, a funeral procession was formed, which included motor vehicles and bicycles. The procession slowly departed from the college and made its way to the capitol, traveling through the Westside and Downtown. Atop the vehicle at the front of the motorcade, was a coffin which read "RIP public education." Upon arriving at the capitol the coffin was carried by a number of pall bearers to the entrance, where students were denied entry into the facility. After conferring with law enforcement, the students agreed to leave the coffin and all signs outside, and were granted entry. Once they entered the building, the group assembled outside the legislative chambers and began singing a politicized version of "Amazing Grace." This poignant rendition of the traditional hymn captured the spirit of the demonstration, clearly showing the seriousness and moral certitude of the participants. According to the Olympian, Lt. Governor Brad Owen found the singing disturbing. Soon, the police escorted the demonstrators away, but not before making their presence felt. Many legislators and staff at the capitol voiced support for the demonstrators, as this movement shares many of the principles conveyed by the "Revenue" coalition a week earlier during the "Rally to Protect Our Future."

This demonstration was held in solidarity with a number of coordinated actions that took place around the country in at least 34 different states, most notably in California. The growth of the new student movement, mobilized to defend their right to quality, affordable education, marks an important development in contemporary American politics. Historically, student movements have played a significant role in catalyzing and sustaining robust social movements and activity. Demonstrations and activities like these have the capacity to build unity and secure popular support, while still displaying principled resistance. The funeral ceremony and procession demonstrated innovative ways of engaging the public, college officials, and elected representatives. By building on these solid beginnings, movements for social and economic justice can be rejuvenated and revived in our community and in the country at large.

Jeff Berryhill is a long-time local activist and supporter of the student movement.

Photo by Sky Cohen

▸ **MARIJUANA,** continued from page 1

juana has managed to keep the crop from passing corn, wheat and soybeans as an American cash crop.

So, how does this local and national story of marijuana commerce connect to the Washington State budget shortfall? Let's take a quick look at the public discussion taking place in California about allowing sale and consumption of marijuana and slapping a tax on the sale to fill the gap in California budget coffers. Here are some facts from the California marijuana tax discussion: Marijuana is believed to be California's number one cash crop. The Drug Policy Alliance Network estimates that marijuana taxation could generate 1.4 billion dollars in tax revenues for California. Go to www.drugpolicy.org for more information about California's deliberation on marijuana regulation and taxation. That's 1.4 billion dollars in revenue before you start calculating savings of public dollars in destroying the crop and investigating, prosecuting, jailing and criminalizing human beings who find the substance to be beneficial, relaxing, fun or otherwise useful in the traditional American pursuit of happiness. California Assemblyman Tom Ammiano introduced a bill (AB 390) on February 23, 2009 in the California legislature to tax and regulate marijuana the way that alcohol is taxed and regulated. Read about it at: http://democrats.assembly.ca.gov/members/a13/News_Room/Press/20090223AD13PR01.aspx.

Ammiano's bill has not moved forward and an initiative to legalize, regulate and tax marijuana is gathering signatures in California to let the citizens be heard on the question of marijuana legalization.

So what about Washington State? This is the Evergreen State after all. Instead of asking pointless questions regarding Joe Hyer's position on marijuana, why shouldn't we take this moment to say, let's stop the lunacy and expense of marijuana criminalization and consider the potential savings from regulating and taxing marijuana sales in the State. Let's save the waste of money at police agencies, courts and penitentiaries treating marijuana users as criminals and reap the tax and budget benefits of regulating and taxing the sale of marijuana in Washington State.

This is not a new discussion. The Seattle Post-Intelligencer ran a piece by Attorney Maureen Brown suggesting this solution on August 14, 2003. You can look it up, as they say in baseball. If you think this is a crazy idea, I suggest you consider the following:

Representatives Roger Goodman and Mary Lou Dickerson introduced House Bill 2401 in the Washington State Legislature on December 7, 2009. The bill had ten sponsors and proposed to legalize marijuana in Washington State and generate taxes from marijuana sales. The bill failed to get out of the House Public Safety Committee on a 6 to 2 vote. HB 1177 that would have simply decriminalized marijuana went down on a 5 to 3 vote. For more information: go to www.washingtonmedicalmarijuanasociety.blogspot.com/.

You can review the coverage on this legislation by the Kirkland Reporter at http://www.pnwlocalnews.com/east_king/kir/news/82749517.html. Goodman is a state representative elected from Kirkland.

So, HB 2401 did not make much headway in the State Leglislature, but the push to legalize marijuana in Washington State continues. Attorney Douglas Hiatt of Seattle has sponsored an initiative with Sensible Washington to legalize the cultivation, possession and sale of marijuana. The Initiative needs to gather 241,000 signatures to make it on the ballot in November.

It's time for a change to marijuana laws in Washington State and it takes courage for the legislators to recognize the need for change and to move this discussion forward. I don't expect that Joe Hyer is in a position to come out and push this legislation today, but many of us can and should. At the end of the day, we need the money in the State budget and we might want to think twice before we let stupid laws destroy careers and criminalize productive, tax-paying people like Joe Hyer and so many others.

For more information on the marijuana initiative, go to www.sensiblewashington.org

The Southwest Washington Headquarters for Sensible Washington is at the Olympia Patient Resource Center, 2747 Pacific Avenue, Suite B-23 Olympia WA 98501.

The Thurston County coordinator for Sensible Washington is Justin Kover. You can reach Justin by email: justinkover@hotmail.com or call OPRC at (360) 456-3517 to get involved.

▸ **IRAN,** continued from page 1

remain ever on the brink of destruction." In other words, as long as other nations have nuclear weapons we will commit to having more of them, and this will help in creating a world without nuclear weapons, even though any nation having them puts the entire world at risk. Kafka would have struggled to write a more conflicting and convoluted statement.

It is important to note that not only does Iran not have a nuclear weapons program, but they currently don't even have uranium available for weaponization. Iran's existing stockpile of uranium has only been enriched at 3.5%. They are presently offering a deal to swap this enriched uranium for nuclear fuel rods containing uranium enriched at 19.5% to use in their research reactors in Tehran. Part of the deal includes acknowledgment and acceptance of international oversight of Iran's nuclear program. To operate nuclear weapons reactors it is necessary to enrich uranium to 90%--far above the amount that Iran has available or is likely to have available in the near future.

Finally, it is important to examine what regard the United States has had for international laws regulating nuclear weapons. So far there are only three countries that have never signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty—Israel, India, and Pakistan. All of these countries are allies of the United States, and at one time or another the United States has helped foster and developed each nation's nuclear weapons program. Most recently the United States has gutted the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty by a deal under Bush which allowed the United States to exchange nuclear technology with India, including nuclear technology that could be used for weapons. An international conference is planned to review the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in May of this year. There is no indication that Obama plans on undoing the work under Bush or seeking to strengthen the treaty.

Where Obama may differ from Bush is his recent announcement that he would put the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty—the international treaty that restricts the testing of nuclear weapons— before the Senate for ratification. It is yet to be seen how sincere this announcement is, or if Obama has enough votes in the Senate to get it ratified.

Without a doubt, the most popular philosopher in the United States has been Jesus of Nazareth, and turning to him for moral guidance may seem like an important thing for Americans to do. Jesus had a fairly good standard when deciding to judge others for their behaviors: he who has never sinned cast the first stone. For the United States to sanction and condemn Iran for its nuclear energy program while funding and expanding its own is not only the definition of hypocrisy, but suicidal. If the Obama administration is truly interested in world peace it should obey an overriding moral principle: lead by example, not through accusation. If Iran should abandon its nuclear energy program, then so should the United States.

"In the richest nation in history"

Starvation

50 million US citizens use food stamps.

One out of five households don't have enough money to purchase food. (2009)

One out of four households with children doesn't have enough money for food.

The US has the highest poverty rate in the industrialized world.

Bankruptcies

950,000 filed for bankruptcy in 2008.

1,400,000 filed in 2009.

Sixty percent of bankruptcies are because of medical costs.

Seventy-five percent of medical bankruptcies are filed by people who have health care insurance.

Health care

United States has the most expensive medical system in the world.

US citizens pay twice as much for medical services than in most of the world.

US ranks 37th in the world for overall health care.

The five largest US health insurance companies set new profit records in 2009 of $12.2 billion in profits, an increase of $4.4 billion, or 56 percent, over 2008.

In 2009, 2.7 million Americans who had been enrolled in private health plans lost coverage.

Fifty million do not have health care.

Personal wealth

In the first year of the economic crisis, workers aged 55-60 (worked 20-30 years) lost 25% of their 401Ks.

Since 2007, Americans have:

- lost $5 trillion in pensions and savings
- lost $13 trillion (30% drop) in value of their homes

Five million have lost their homes; by 2014 that is expected to rise to 13 million.

Foreclosures

In January 2010:

- The number of U.S. households facing foreclosure increased 15 percent from the same month last year.
- More than 315,000 households (one in 409 homes) received a foreclosure-related notice.
- the 11th straight month with more than 300,000 properties receiving a foreclosure filing.
- Banks repossessed more than 87,000 homes.

Currently, 25% of current mortgages are underwater. (They owe more on their mortgage than the property is actually worth.)

Deutsche Bank predicts underwater mortgages will rise to 48 percent (25 million homes).

10,000 US homes enter foreclosure every day.

Borrowers who have a conventional loan on a house and are seriously delinquent were 5.29 percent in November, more than double the rate of 2.13 percent in November 2008.

The next wave of foreclosures will not be of home owners who purchased using the more dangerous adjustable rate mortgages or other sub-prime loans. They will consist mainly of mortgagors who have standard, 30 year fixed rate loans including those who made down payments of up to 20% or more.

It is predicted that foreclosures will continue to stay at a higher level as even better prepared home owners begin to default on their loans in the coming months.

U.S. Prisons

The US incarcerates more people than any other nation, 2.3 million (700 per 100,000).

China incarcerates 110 per 100,000.

France 80 per 100,000.

Saudi Arabia 45 per 100,000.

US prison industry is a great place to invest; a new prison opens every week.

Unemployment

Unemployment doesn't count involuntary part-time workers or discouraged workers.

In January, 1.1 million discouraged workers were eliminated from the unemployment total.

If the unemployed and discouraged workers were included in the unemployment rate, the rate would rise from 9.7% to over 20%.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics "recently discovered 824,000 job losses were never accounted for due to a 'modeling error.'"

While the Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates 20,000 jobs were lost in January, TrimTabs estimates there were actually 104,000 jobs lost.

To get back to 4.6 unemployment rate, the US would need to create 10 million jobs.

The US economy is still consistently shedding jobs.

Six million have been unemployed for over six months.

Twenty million qualified for unemployment benefits last year.

Twenty-seven states' unemployment funds are empty.

Seven states' funds are near empty.

A total of 40 states are predicted to become empty.

1.2 million jobless workers will become ineligible for federal unemployment benefits in March unless Congress extends the unemployment benefits. By June, this number will swell to nearly 5 million.

Currently, 5.6 million people are accessing one of the federal extensions.

There are six people for every job opening.

The most productive workers

Americans are "the most productive workers in the world."

In 2009, "average worker productivity increased by 9.5%."

In 2009, "unit labor cost decreased by 5.2%."

Those employed are working more hours.

"American job satisfaction level is at an all-time low."

Poverty

Fifteen million workers are now living in poverty.

"Sixty percent of Americans now live paycheck to paycheck."

All of this while many of the 220 companies in the S&P 500 have been reporting record profits.

An average of 345 million was earned by the 400 highest-earning households in the United States in 2007, up from $263 million in 2006, an increase of 31 percent. Each paid an average tax rate of 16.6 percent, the lowest since the I.R.S. began tracking the data in 1992. (Tax.com)

Government debt

In February, President Obama signed legislation lifting the cap on government borrowing to $14.3 trillion, an increase from $12.4 trillion to keep the U.S. from going into default.

February 24 -- Federal Reserve Chairman Ben S. Bernanke warned Congress that the United States could soon face a debt crisis like the one in Greece.

Sources: *The Economic Elite Have Engineered an Extraordinary Coup by David DeGraw, Alternet; Health Care for America Now; CalculatedRisk; Atlanta Mortgage Industry Examiner; Washington Times*

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Thanks for reading!

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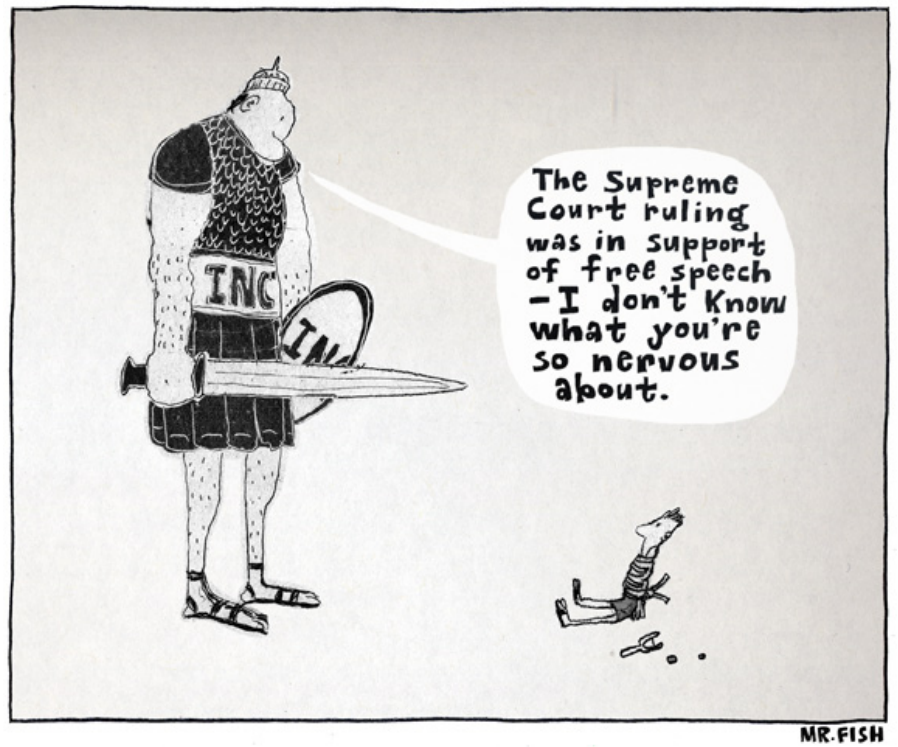

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